

Teen author and musician Jess Robus publishes book of poetry *A Few Slivers of Light*

 By [Martin Myers](#)

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With a maturity that belies her 14 years, vibrant Jess Robus is already a singer, songwriter, debater and musical theatre aficionado.

During June, she added 'published author' and 'published poet' to those accolades, with the release of her debut book *A Few Slivers of Light*, now available for purchase online on Amazon, on her website or via PayStack.

A Few Slivers of Light is a beautifully written, vulnerable and emotive collection of poems of a teenager's journey with anxiety and depression.

Robus hopes she will inspire other teens and young adults to speak up about their struggles and to reach parents who might have children experiencing these challenges.

I caught up with the dynamic Robus last week.





Source: Supplied





Source: Supplied

▣ ***The new decade means:***

Opportunity. I think that the new decade comes complete with the opportunity to develop new skills and learn new things about ourselves.

▣ ***Fame is about:***

Fame is about doing something noteworthy, as it was put in the musical *Hamilton*: “the world’s gonna know your name”.

▣ ***I don’t do:***

I don’t like loud noises or patronising people. The former makes me very stressed and the latter is just irritating.

▣ ***What does music mean to you?***

Music is a method of self-expression and one of the purest forms of creativity. I’m synaesthetic, which means that when I listen to music, I visualise colours along with it and a good song will be a beautiful rainbow of shapes and hues.

▣ ***What does poetry mean to you?***

Poetry is a way of expressing my emotions and being able to process them and deal with them in a constructive manner.

▣ ***My writing is about:***

Usually, I write about feelings or experiences – how I imagine I would react in certain situations – but I also often place

myself into the lives of fictional characters and write from their perspective.

❖ ***I'd love to co-write with:***

I would love to get to write with Dodie Clark and Malinda Kathleen Reese – they're two incredible musicians and such inspiring people. If I were to write in the musical theatre genre it would be a dream to work with the composer Lin-Manuel Miranda (he's incredible!) or locally with Jonathan Roxmouth.

❖ ***Where do you go for inspiration to create poetry?***

I draw from my own experiences and emotions and I love to read the work of other poets such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, r m drake and Carol Ann Duffy.

❖ ***The most enjoyable aspect of my work:***

The ability to share my words and my story with others and possibly inspire them to create is something that I'll never get tired of.

❖ ***The poem I love to read in every interview:***

One of my favourites is "Love is a Red Balloon". It was one of the earliest poems in the book and is a very meaningful one for me. I'm often asked to read "Eleven" because it's a high-impact poem that is unfortunately relevant to SA society.

❖ ***My style icon is:***

Juno McGuff (yes, that one from the movie *Juno*). My wardrobe is made up of shirts with bad jokes or fandom references on them – style isn't really my forte, but Juno and I have an alarmingly similar taste in clothes.





Source: Supplied





Source: Supplied

▣ **What is your most treasured possession?**

I have a teddy bear named Marmalade. He's as old as I am and I love him a lot.

🎯 ***Who are your heroes?***

Definitely Mr Rogers – I love his kind philosophy on life. In the writing world, I look up to Leigh Bardugo, JRR Tolkien and Carol Ann Duffy and Greta Gerwig.

When it comes to music, I love Dodie Clark, Malinda Kathleen Reese, Olivia Rodrigo, Taylor Swift and Lin Manuel Maranda.

🎯 ***What sets you apart?***

I have a very vivid imagination and an ability to see things differently than most – I also feel everything very deeply. I'm a hard worker and once I start something that I'm passionate about I'm very stubborn and don't give up easily.

🎯 ***If you weren't a musician or poet, what would you be doing?***

Probably a screenwriter.

🎯 ***Who would play you in a movie version of your life and why?***

I'd like to think Millie Bobby Brown since she's an amazing actress and a fellow brunette. She's a Slytherin though (I'm a Hufflepuff). Oh well.

🎯 ***Five words to describe yourself:***

Loyal, kind, stubborn, thoughtful, creative.

🎯 ***What is your favourite word?***

Not very profound but it's 'okay' - it feels so nice to say and it has a very interesting etymological history.

🎯 ***Favourite fashion garment:***

Coats. And hats! If my mum would let me dress like Kaz Brekker whenever I go out in public then I would.

🎯 ***Give us a piece of slang and what it means:***

This one comes from within my friends' group – squaff. It means wrong.

🎯 ***Top of your bucket list:***

To live in New York and get an internship writing for Netflix or Marvel.

🎯 ***Your greatest achievement:***

When my book first came out a family friend messaged me to say that they'd shared the book with a girl who was struggling emotionally. She said that the book read like her feelings on a page – that really meant a lot to me.

🎯 ***What do you complain about the most?***

I don't like mornings or very cold weather so waking up at 6am in the middle of June to go to school results in quite a bit of complaining from me.

🎯 ***What are you like on stage?***

I tend to be very energetic, emotive and passionate. When acting or singing I love performing character pieces.

🎯 ***Do you do charity work, if so, what do you do?***

I don't often, but I do speak out as often as possible about mental health and its effects on teenagers.

🎯 ***What is your life plan?***

I want to study creative writing with a focus on screenwriting (preferably at Cambridge University) and then go on to write scripts for Marvel movies and TV shows. I'd also love to write songs for soundtracks – I love writing music!

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